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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 000388

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/13/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [BG](#) [PK](#) [IN](#) [SAARC](#)

SUBJECT: SAARC SUMMIT: WHAT'S THE HOLD UP?

REF: A. NEW DELHI 303

[1B](#). 04 NEW DELHI 7426

Classified By: PolCouns Geoff Pyatt. Reason 1.4 (B,D)

- [11](#). (C) Summary: The GOI has not yet agreed to the proposed February 7-9 dates for the SAARC Summit, and media reports indicate New Delhi has
- [12](#). (C) MEA Deputy Secretary (SAARC) Oscar Kerketta told Poloff on January 12 that there was still "some haggling" going on over the proposed Elections No Excuse

- [13](#). (C) Some commentators have attributed New Delhi's resistance to the February dates to upcoming elections in the battleground states of India. It Wouldn't Be the First Time

- [14](#). (C) Although the Dhaka Summit will mark SAARC's twentieth anniversary, it will only be the thirteenth summit, as seven summits have been held. While this meeting does not appear to be in any imminent danger of being called off, observers in India suspect bilateral friction may be at play.
- [15](#). (C) MEA officials have given other reasons for India's hesitation. MEA Director (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives) TS Sandhu said it would not be appropriate for the PM and Foreign Minister to be seen on non-tsunami related travel while parts of the country are still recovering from the disaster. Kerketta's Problems With Postponing

- [16](#). (C) ORF Senior Fellow Jayshree Sengupta, who takes an admittedly pessimistic view of the organization ("SAARC does not have a bright future"), SIPDIS for SAARC implementation in a November 22 conversation with PolCouns (Ref B). While he did not think the Dhaka Summit would include India, Comment: Baglihar Theory Holds No Water

- [17](#). (C) Despite the chatter among some commentators, we do not buy the theory that the GOI is using SAARC as a tool to show its displeasure with India.
MULFORD